

Press Release**DATE:** November 7, 2013**CONTACT:** Annie Parker, California High-Speed Rail Authority
(916) 403-6931 annie.parker@hsr.ca.gov
Carolyn Ballou, California Department of Veterans Affairs
(916) 653-1355 carolyn.Ballou@calvet.ca.gov

California High-Speed Rail Authority and California Department of Veterans Affairs Sign Strategic Agreement

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – During a special ceremony earlier today, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) joined the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) in a major effort to maximize small business participation, especially to those owned by disabled veterans, on the high-speed rail project. Authority CEO Jeff Morales and CalVet Secretary Peter J. Gravett signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement that not only makes sure disabled veteran-owned businesses know about the high-speed rail project, but it will ensure that those businesses are prepared for the project's many job opportunities.

The Authority Board of Directors is keenly aware of the need to help small businesses, especially those firms that are owned by or employ veterans. Board Vice-Chairs Tom Richards and Jim Hartnett and Board Members Mike Rossi, Patrick Henning, Sr. and Tom Umberg are all military veterans.

"Veterans know what it means to serve their nation and to commit to a mission bigger than themselves. That's why we are proud to have them as part of the high-speed rail team," said Umberg, an attorney and U.S. Army Reserve colonel who has done three tours overseas, including eleven months in Afghanistan. "We're especially committed to military veterans who have returned from active duty to civilian life and are interested in this historic project."

"CalVet is committed to ensuring that veteran small business owners and disabled veteran business enterprise owners are well represented in the state government contracting marketplace," said CalVet Secretary Peter J. Gravett. "We appreciate the California High-Speed Rail Authority's willingness to work with us toward that goal."

The agreement outlines how the Authority and CalVet will share services and resources in outreach efforts to strengthen and expand the use of disabled veteran owned small businesses on the initial construction of high-speed rail in the Central Valley. The Authority and CalVet have also made a commitment to holding small business certification and business development workshops, providing technical and referral assistance on procurement opportunities and helping small business owners and representatives navigate websites with procurement opportunities.

"Starting a small business and starting over as a disabled veteran are both about meeting challenges, never giving up, and adapting in order to overcome and succeed," said Chris Coles, Anchor Engineering Principal. "At Anchor Engineering, the work we have done to further the progress and well-being of Californians is very satisfying. Through it we meet our company goal of, "Public good through public works." Without our Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises certification, it is doubtful that we would have had a chance to survive, prosper, and carry out that mission."

The Authority is committed to small businesses playing a major role in building the statewide high-speed rail project. The Small Business Program has an aggressive 30 percent goal for small business participation including Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE), Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBE) and Micro-Businesses (MB).

About California Department of Veteran Affairs

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) works in cooperation with a network of County Veterans Service Offices to connect California's 1.8 million veterans and their families with the state and federal benefits they have earned through military service. The department works to ensure veterans successfully transition from military to civilian life and live with the dignity and

respect they deserve. To learn more about CalVet and the programs and services it provides, go to www.calvet.ca.gov, download the CalVet mobile app, or call 877-741-8532.

About California High-Speed Rail Authority

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is responsible for planning, designing, building and operation of the first high-speed rail system in the nation. California high-speed rail will connect the mega-regions of the state, contribute to economic development and a cleaner environment, create jobs and preserve agricultural and protected lands. By 2029, the system will run from San Francisco to the Los Angeles basin in under three hours at speeds capable of over 200 miles per hour. The system will eventually extend to Sacramento and San Diego, totaling 800 miles with up to 24 stations. In addition, the Authority is working with regional partners to implement a statewide rail modernization plan that will invest billions of dollars in local and regional rail lines to meet the state's 21st century transportation needs. To learn more visit the Authority's website at <http://www.hsr.ca.gov> and join us on facebook.com/CaliforniaHighSpeedRail and follow us at twitter.com/cahsra

####